

Message Text

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PASS TO LE/BEERS, US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE,
DEPT OF INTERIOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SENV SZ US

SUBJECT: COMMERCIAL INFORMATION REQUEST

REF: A) BERN 201

B) STATE 203972, SEPT 17, 1974

1. SWISS POLICE DIVISION HAS RESPONDED TO EMBASSY'S REQUEST
FOR INFORMATION ON VESFORT ET AL (REFTEL B).

2. ACCORDING TO REPORT PREPARED BY POLICE OF CANTON VAUD,
VESFORT SA OF LAUSANNE IN PROCESS OF LIQUIDATION AND ALL
AFFAIRS BEING HANDLED BY FIDUCIARY FIES ALSO OF LAUSANNE.
EXAMINATION OF INVOICES IN POSSESSION OF FIDUCIARY FIES
SHOWS VESFORT ENGAGED IN LARGE FUR AND SKIN TRADE, PARTICULARLY
IN SECOND HALF 1972. FURS AND SKINS, INCLUDING THOSE OF CHEETAHS,
LEOPARD, OCELOTS, AND AMERICAN CROCODILES (CAYMANS), IMPORTED
FROM MEXICO, BRAZIL, PARAGUAY, AND VARIOUS AFRICAN COUNTRIES
THROUGH LAVANCHY & CIE. WHICH HANDLED CUSTOMS CLEARANCE AT
GENEVA-COINTRIN AIRPORT. GOODS THEN TURNED OVER TO VARIOUS
FREIGHT FORWARDERS SUCH AS GOTTARDO RUFFONI IN CHIASSO (FOR
ACCOUNT OF PAOLO), SAIMA IN BRIG, AND LAMPRECHT IN BASEL (UNDER
REFERENCE EXPORT LONDON). VAUD POLICE AUTHORITIES QUESTIONED
VESFORT PRESIDENT LOUIS MORDASINI WHO DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF
ERNEST VESSELY OR MELVIN TAKS. HE DID,
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HOWEVER, SAY HE HAD MET ROGER FORTE.

3. REPORT FROM CANTON TICINO POLICE CONFIRMS THAT GOTTARDO RUFFONI SA HAS BONDED WAREHOUSE IN CHICASSO USED FOR STORAGE OF FURS AND SKINS. ACCORDING TO COMPANY OFFICIAL, SHIPPING DOCUMENTS FOR SKINS GIVE NO INDICATION OF TYPE OR QUALITY AND NO CHECK OF CONTENTS IS MADE. SKINS HELD UNTIL INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED FROM SENDER AND THEN THEY FORWARDED, USUALLY TO ITALY, GERMANY, OR FRANCE. ALL SHIPMENTS MADE TO AGENTS AND FINAL ADDRESSEE UNKNOWN. NO SKINS STAY IN SWITZERLAND. OFFICIAL TOLD POLICE THAT ERNEST VESSELY AND MELVIN TAKS RENT STORAGE SPACE WITH GOTTARDO RUFFONI IN NAME OF PHOENIX MANAGEMENT CO. OF PANAMA, P. O. BOX 513, LAUSANNE. VESSELY AND TAKS VISIT CHICASSO TWO OR THREE TIMES PER YEAR BUT COMPANY OFFICIAL SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO GOODS KEPT IN STORAGE SPACE. GOTTARDO RUFFONI KOWNS OF VESFORT BUT DENIES ANY KNOWLEDGE OF TRADE IN SKINS AND FURS OF PROTECTED SPECIES.

4. ABOVE REPORTS AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS AIR POUCHED TO LE/BEERS, US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE.
DAVIS

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